



Panel Attorney Spotlight

**Cassie Springer-Sullivan**

Cassie Springer-Sullivan knew since she was sixteen years old that she wanted to be an attorney, and use her skills, knowledge, and empathy to assist people in times of crisis. Years later in 2008, Cassie started her own law firm, Springer-Sullivan & Roberts LLP, with fellow ALRP panel attorney Michelle Roberts. The bulk of Cassie's work is dedicated to representing disabled clients who have been denied or terminated from long-term disability insurance plans that are governed by the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA). Over the course of her professional career, Cassie has demonstrated an incredible commitment to ALRP clients with disabling HIV/AIDS who suffer the devastation of losing their long-term disability income.

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## ALRP Client Fights for Fair Housing

Panel attorney secures reasonable modification

In April, 2007, James Michael, who is HIV+, was elated to discover that he had won a lottery for a new affordable housing development for people with disabilities. Mr. Michael is a double-amputee above the knee due to a rare blood disorder and is functionally blind in his left eye, although he had good vision in his right eye. Before moving into the complex, Mr. Michael informed the property management company that he required grab bars around the toilet and shower in order to get in and out of his wheelchair.

Upon moving into his new apartment, Mr. Michael discovered that the grab bars he required had not been installed as promised. Mr. Michael made additional requests for installation of the bars, which were ignored.

In the early morning hours of September 4, 2007, Mr. Michael awoke needing to relieve himself and made his way to the toilet. Mr. Michael successfully made the transition from his wheelchair to the toilet. Because Mr. Michael did not have the reinforced grab bars to support his weight during this transfer process, he was forced to balance all of his weight on a cheap plastic toilet seat instead. Upon returning himself to his wheelchair, Mr. Michael's hand slipped on the plastic toilet seat causing him to lose his balance. This caused Mr. Michael's wheelchair to flip over, causing Mr. Michael to fall face first onto the corner of the sink basin striking his right eye (his only good eye) and rupturing the globe of his eye.



Attorneys Wesley Wakeford and Steven Taxman of Taxman Wakeford.

Following the accident, Mr. Michael underwent multiple surgeries at Kaiser Santa Rosa to attempt to correct the damage to his right eye. Ultimately, however, his ophthalmologist determined that his maximal vision recovery in his right eye would only be the ability to vaguely see shadows and movement.

That's when Mr. Michael called ALRP for assistance. ALRP referred him to Wesley Wakeford, of the firm of Tax-

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### ALRP's Pro Bono Connections Initiative Highlights

- Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP (through Austin Schwing) accepted a difficult-to-place immigration law referral to defend a client against deportation.
- Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP (through Lorelei Craig) took two immigration referrals in the month of December alone.
- Seyfarth Shaw LLP (through Laura Maethlen) took an emergency referral for a client facing eviction from his home.

## ALRP Mission

To help people with HIV/AIDS maintain or improve their health by resolving their legal issues.



# From the Heart

ALRP Executive Director Bill Hirsh

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## Facing the Future Together

People keep saying that the economy is turning around, but there has been no upswing for our clients. Instead, the past year has unleashed a relentless assault on people with disabilities, including those with HIV/AIDS. Funding cuts have resulted in reductions to income support, medical and dental services, mental health services and in-home supportive services, leaving our clients more vulnerable, more alone, and in many instances more likely to face overwhelming legal obstacles.

As we begin a new year, I am mindful of the many challenges our clients face. At the same time I am heartened by the incredible efforts undertaken by our staff attorneys, our amazing volunteer Panel attorneys and our sister agencies, whose work helps to meet the many needs experienced by our clients. ALRP begins this year with two new initiatives intended to help our clients through some of those challenges.

First, ALRP is part of a new legal collaborative aimed at preventing home-

lessness in San Francisco and funded through federal stimulus dollars. This new funding allows ALRP's housing attorneys to fight zealously to keep people with HIV/AIDS in their homes. It also opens up a new funding stream to help people with HIV/AIDS cover their rent and other housing costs, so they can maintain stable affordable housing. ALRP is partnering with the Eviction Defense Collaborative, the Bar Association of San Francisco's Volunteer Legal Services Program and the AIDS Housing Alliance in these efforts to prevent homelessness.

ALRP will also launch the HIV Consumer Advocacy Project (HCAP) in March. This program will help people with HIV/AIDS to navigate the often complex processes that are required to access public services. Specifically, HCAP will provide outreach, advocacy, and mediation to help HIV+ consumers access services and resolve differences with publicly funded HIV service providers. Our new staff attorney will help ensure that clients get the services they need in order to successfully manage their HIV.

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## ALRP Staff

Eric Bull  
Office Manager

Diana Camacho  
Volunteer Coordinator

Maisha S. Cole, Esq.  
Outreach Attorney

Ted Garey, Esq.  
Staff Attorney

Bill Hirsh, Esq.  
Executive Director

Diana Hughes, Esq.  
Staff Attorney

Sara Malan, Esq.  
Housing Attorney

Jim McBride  
Development Director

Ana Montano, Esq.  
Immigration Attorney

Amy Orgain, Esq.  
Insurance Attorney

Jaime Rush, Esq.  
Housing Attorney

## ALRP's Recent Events

### MACY'S PASSPORT IN-STORE



ALRP sold tickets and volunteered In-Store this past September as part of Macy's Passport In-Store, a shopping fundraiser for AIDS agencies. Special thanks to volunteers Marti Simon, Sabrina Larson and Noel Rodriguez, and to everyone who purchased tickets!

### FOLSOM STREET FAIR



More than 25 volunteers joined Team ALRP at Dore Alley & Folsom Street Fairs in 2009, helping us to raise \$6,250 to support ALRP programs. Thanks to all of you who turned out in support (especially the early and late shift volunteers!).

### CASTRO STREET FAIR



ALRP Staff and Volunteers collect entrance donations at a Castro Street Fair gate.

On October 4th, over twenty-five of ALRP's wonderful volunteers came together to celebrate the community and support charitable causes important to the Castro community. Volunteers collecting donations at the gates helped to raise almost \$2,000 for ALRP.

### ALRP From the Heart 26th ANNUAL RECEPTION



SF Supervisor David Campos with 2009 Annual Reception Honorees Kevyn Orr of Jones Day, Larry Katzin and Amir Atashi Rang.

More than 300 guests were present on October 14th as San Francisco Supervisor David Campos presented awards to ALRP's 2009 honorees, including Larry Katzin, Esq. as the Clint Hockenberry Leadership Award recipient; Amir Atashi Rang, Esq. as the recipient of Attorney of the Year; and the Firm of the Year Award to Jones Day. Your contributions helped ALRP to raise over \$118,000, almost 90% of which is going directly to support ALRP's legal services for people with HIV/AIDS. Special thanks to event sponsors Bizzarro's Gala Auctions, Laurel's Catering, and Target Stores.

### ALRP HOLIDAY PARTY



Diana Camacho, Ana Montano and Maisha & Amir Cole enjoy their secret Santa gifts.

ALRP staff and volunteers came together to celebrate holiday cheer at the annual ALRP Holiday party in December. ALRP staff and their loved ones shared delicious food, good laughs and a secret Santa gift exchange while all of the ALRP babies played!

## Volunteers Corner

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We invite all long-standing and new volunteers to come join the fun at the these upcoming events:

ACADEMY OF FRIENDS  
OSCAR NIGHT GALA  
March 6 & 7

ALRP VOLUNTEER  
APPRECIATION PARTY  
April 21

ALRP LEADERSHIP  
BENEFIT  
May 19

REAF GALA  
August 15

To volunteer or for questions, please contact Diana Camacho, at [diana@alrp.org](mailto:diana@alrp.org) or (415) 701-1200 ext. 303.

## Fair Housing

Continued from pg. 1

man Wakeford. With the help of Mr. Wakeford, his partner Steven B. Taxman, and associate John H. Scarpino, Taxman Wakeford filed suit on behalf of James Michael.

In the end, the parties settled the case less than 2-weeks before trial in the amount of \$275,000. Mr. Michael was overjoyed that justice was served, and hopefully his case will prevent other such tragedies from happening to disabled individuals who need reasonable modifications in their housing.

Shop for ALRP

SHOP ONLINE at [www.iGive.com/ALRP](http://www.iGive.com/ALRP)



Up to 27% of your purchases are automatically donated to ALRP.

FIND GREAT GIFTS AT UNDER ONE ROOF



518A Castro between 18th & 19th. Store is open from 10am-9pm daily. Or shop online [www.underoneroof.org](http://www.underoneroof.org).

SHOP FOR YOUR MOMS, DADS & GRADS!



Purchase The Bracelet from the Until There's A Cure Foundation. Check out [www.until.org](http://www.until.org).

CLEAN OUT YOUR CLOSETS for ALRP



COMMUNITY THRIFT  
623 Valencia at 17th, 10-5 daily, [www.communitythriftsf.org](http://www.communitythriftsf.org). Please list ALRP Code 230.

## Want to join ALRP's Legacy Society?

ALRP can assist with your estate planning



Leaving a legacy through planned giving is a wonderful act. The impact your legacy can have on others – including ALRP clients – is significant:

Help fund a cure for AIDS \* Ensure equal rights for people with HIV  
Eliminate HIV/AIDS discrimination in the workplace \* Enable HIV-positive immigrants to stay in the U.S. legally

A planned gift to ALRP helps ensure the future of the services we provide and may further your financial goals.

Many of ALRP's supporters make charitable gifts by naming ALRP as a beneficiary in their Wills. The federal government encourages these gifts or bequests, by allowing an unlimited estate tax charitable deduction.

To assist with ALRP constituent planned giving, ALRP has formed the ALRP Planned Giving Advisory Council - a group of experienced and committed professionals available to assist you with your planned giving and estate planning needs.

Make your impact by leaving your legacy, with a planned gift to ALRP.

## Have you named ALRP in your will?

If you have already included ALRP in your will or estate plans, we'd like to acknowledge your dedication and support by listing you as a member of The ALRP Angels Legacy Society



To become a member, simply confirm your planned giving intentions to ALRP in writing (copy of the page in your will that mentions ALRP or a simple email communicating your intentions).

Membership in the ALRP Angels Legacy Society includes special recognition at ALRP major donor events, on our website, and in our Panel Notes newsletters.

For information on getting help with your will, making a planned gift, or joining the ALRP Angels Legacy Society, contact Jim McBride, ALRP Development Director, at (415) 701-1200 ext. 301 or [jim@alrp.org](mailto:jim@alrp.org).

## EASY and CREATIVE WAYS TO SUPPORT ALRP

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### ONLINE DONATIONS

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Simply click the blue DONATE NOW button on any page at [www.alrp.org](http://www.alrp.org) to help keep ALRP's legal services available to people with HIV/AIDS this year. You can make a one-time or monthly/quarterly recurring donation. Or mail a gift directly to ALRP, 1663 Mission St., Suite 500, San Francisco, CA 94103.

### WILLS & BEQUESTS

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Join the ALRP Angels Legacy Society by naming ALRP in your will or trust. Simply send us an email confirming your intention or a copy of the ALRP page of your estate documents. For more information, visit [www.alrp.org](http://www.alrp.org) and click on the Donate menu item, then click Planned Giving: Wills/Bequests in the left menu.

### MATCHING GIFTS

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Get your firm/company to match your donation and MAKE TWICE THE IMPACT! Just contact your HR or Contributions office, fill out the form, and send it in with your donation. ALRP can assist you. Just call us...

### CAR DONATIONS

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With the ALRP Car Donation Program, you can get a tax break, FREE IRS and DMV paperwork, and FREE pick-up (in most cases). To donate your car or truck, call BIZZARRO'S AUCTIONS at 1 (866) 273-5898 or contact ALRP.

### UNITED WAY GIFTS

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Please designate ALRP by including our address; 1663 Mission Street, Suite 500, San Francisco, CA 94103. If you are a federal or state employee, you can designate ALRP through the Combined Federal Campaign and the California State Employee's Charitable Campaign. Look for ALRP in a campaign directory.

Please contact our Development Director, Jim McBride, at 415-701-1200 ext. 301 or [jim@alrp.org](mailto:jim@alrp.org) if you have any questions about making a financial contribution to ALRP.

## LSDP

### JOIN ALRP's LSDP

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Does your firm order electronic discovery services, schedule depositions, or purchase subpoena preparation or record retrieval services?

If yes, your legal service purchases generate automatic donations to ALRP just by participating in our LEGAL SERVICES DONATION PROGRAM (LSDP).



ADS provides a full range of electronic discovery solutions and is donating 3% of all revenue generated from participating law firms and Panel attorneys to ALRP.



U.S. Legal Support donates \$10.00 for each deposition and \$2.00 per location for record retrievals.

Firms participating in the LSDP receive high-quality services and special pricing from these vendors while generating donations to ALRP.

To participate, contact:  
ADS-SF (415) 608-4375  
ADS-Palo Alto  
(650) 575-4415  
U.S. Legal Support  
(415) 215-1134  
or contact Jim McBride at  
(415) 701-1200 ext. 301.

Thank you for supporting our work through the LSDP.

ALRP WELCOMES  
NEW STAFF ATTORNEYS



Ted  
Garey,  
Esq.  
re-  
ceived  
his

B.A. in Psychology from the University of Virginia and his J.D. from UC Hastings in 2009, and was admitted to practice law later that year. Ted served as the Editor-in-Chief of the Hastings International & Comparative Law Review and was involved in its Civil Justice Clinic, representing low-income clients with wage and hour and disability issues. Ted worked as an ALRP Law Clerk while in law school, and also has litigation experience in many areas of civil law. Ted is an active member of BALIF and enjoys traveling.

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Barbara and her J.D. from UC Hastings. She was an extern for Judge Charles R. Breyer and was one of the editors of the Hastings Women's Law Journal. She is currently working at ALRP on a fellowship from Dewey & LeBoeuf, LLP. In her free time Diana is an avid tennis player.

## What you need to know about wills

By Alexis Lynch, ALRP Law Clerk

Dear ALRP,

I am a person living with AIDS and was recently advised to draft a will. While my health is good now, I have had my ups and downs, and I realize I am getting older. My partner and I are not married, although we have been together for 20 years. I want my partner to have all of my belongings and make my final arrangements. Do I need to make a will, and are there any other arrangements I should make?

Sincerely,  
Concerned in SF

Dear Concerned,  
Yes, you should make a will...

Why should I make a will?

A will allows you to determine who will get your property, assets and possessions after you die. When an individual dies without a will, California law determines who the beneficiaries will be regardless of what his/her wishes had been. Someone such as a friend or non-registered domestic partner would not have a legal right to any of your property, even if that had been your wish. A will can help avoid family disputes concerning your property. In addition to distributing property, a will affords you the ability to outline what type of arrangements should be made concerning your funeral and burial.

What is an executor and how do I choose who my executor should be?

An executor is the person who collects and manages your assets after you die. This person is responsible for many things, including paying any taxes and debts you owe. The executor will disburse the remaining funds to the beneficiaries, as outlined in your will. Since the executor will be the

person carrying out your final wishes, he/she should be someone you trust and know will act responsibly. This person is also responsible for making all funeral/burial arrangements, so it is wise to discuss your wishes concerning these events prior to your death, even if your wishes are included in the will. You should give a copy of your will to the executor and confirm they are willing to serve in this capacity. It is important to name an alternate executor in the event the primary executor is not able or willing to carry out the duties when the time comes.

How do I ensure that someone does not lose their government benefits because they receive an inheritance from me?

You may be concerned that leaving someone an inheritance will disqualify them from receiving benefits which they currently receive. For instance, programs such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medi-Cal, housing subsidies and food stamps are all based on financial need and can be lowered or eliminated if someone receives extra income (such as an inheritance). One way to protect your beneficiary from losing their benefits is by setting up a Special Needs Trust for the individual. A Special Needs Trust puts the money in the control of a third party (such as a financial institution or a close friend). The third party or trustee makes payments for the beneficiary's expenses such as rent, bills, etc. You are right to be concerned about these arrangements, and you should consult with an attorney to discuss options.

Are there any other important arrangements I should make?

There are two other important forms to complete: a Power of Attorney and

Continued on next page

As an attorney who represents disabled clients with few financial resources, Cassie is in a unique position to appreciate pro-bono work. She says, "One of the things I love most about my job is feeling like my clients count on me... clients whose livelihood depends on my ability to represent them. I feel honored to give people who are in a really desperate situation some reprieve by taking away the extra stress of dealing with their insurance company." Although ERISA is an extremely specialized legal area, Cassie sees its nuances as an opportunity to change and refine the law to make it easier for future clients to maintain their disability benefits. In addition to providing direct assistance to ALRP clients, Cassie has been involved in several landmark ERISA cases resulting in new case law that will benefit tens of thousands of future disability claimants.

Cassie is originally from San Diego, but moved north to attend UC Berkeley as an undergraduate in 1995. She immediately fell in love with the Bay Area and has resided here ever since. She remained at UC Berkeley to attend Boalt Hall School of Law where she served as Editor-in-Chief of the Berkeley Women's Law Journal. After graduating from Boalt, Cassie's desire to assist clients in times of hardship led her to work for a plaintiff-side ERISA firm where she also represented ALRP clients, before starting her own practice.

Outside of work, Cassie manages to serve her community and spend time with her family. She is currently the East Bay Family Teams Chair for the March of Dimes, an organization that is near and dear to her heart. Cassie currently serves as a co-chair on the Benefit Claims and Individual Rights Subcommittee of the American Bar Association's Section of

Labor & Employment Law, and is a member of the section's Supreme Court Panel Committee. She is also co-chair of the individual employee benefits subsection of the committee. Cassie is also blessed with an almost two year-old daughter, Kate, whom she describes as the "light of my life." Owning her own firm has enabled her to continue to do the work that she loves while maintaining a balance between her legal practice and her personal life.

In Cassie's words, "ALRP is a wonderful resource for clients who deserve access to good legal representation in their hour of need." In addition to representing many ALRP clients directly, Cassie has served as a mentor and an invaluable resource to ALRP staff attorneys. ALRP is truly honored to have a panel attorney with Cassie's passion for service and dedication to those living with HIV/AIDS.

an Advance Health Care Directive. A Power of Attorney authorizes someone (known as an agent) to act on your behalf in financial and legal matters. An Advance Health Care Directive allows you to appoint an agent to make decisions regarding your medical treatment and care. You can make requests regarding prolonging your life or withholding treatment, and donating your organs. You have the right to revoke a Power of Attorney or an Advance Health Care Directive at any time.

How can ALRP help?

ALRP can help you find an attorney to draft a simple will for free. A sim-

ple will is one in which a person has no children, no real property and only limited assets. For more complex wills and estate planning, you may need to set up a Trust or a Special Needs Trust.

ALRP drafts Power of Attorneys and Advance Health Care Directives for free, along with providing free notary services. ALRP is always available to explain all these documents to you in more detail. This article is intended to give you general information about addressing estate planning, but it does not cover all aspects of the law and is not meant to be legal advice for your specific situation.

### From the Heart

Having survived the tremendous challenges of 2009, ALRP is once again reminded of the many ways our wonderful volunteers and donors make our work possible. Because of you ALRP succeeded in meeting all of our fundraising goals and leveraged more than four million dollars of donated legal services last year. Thank you. And while 2010 promises to be just as challenging, together we can continue to help turn around the lives of those who need us.



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Panel Notes  
Volume XIII, No. 1  
Spring 2010

Published by the AIDS  
Legal Referral Panel of the  
San Francisco Bay Area.

Editor  
Diana Camacho



## Upcoming ALRP Events



**AOF OSCAR NIGHT GALA**  
Sunday, MARCH 7th  
Fort Mason, SF  
Put on the Ritz and help support ALRP.



**AIDSWALK 2010**  
Sunday, JULY 18th  
Golden Gate Park, SF  
Join the ALRP Legal Eagles Team!



**ALRP VOLUNTEER  
APPRECIATION PARTY**  
Wednesday, April 21st  
Pillsbury Winthrop LLP, SF  
Be there for the annual celebration.



**REAF "Help Is On The Way XVI" Gala**  
Sunday, AUGUST 15th  
Herbst Theater, SF  
Get a front row seat to the music and  
dance event of the year...



**ALRP LEADERSHIP BENEFIT**  
Wednesday, May 19th  
Lead the way as we honor our major  
donors and community partners.



**ALRP From the Heart 27th  
ANNUAL RECEPTION & AUCTION**  
Wednesday, OCTOBER 20th  
Help us commemorate ALRP's 27th!